



March 25, 2014

To: Chairman Nofs and members of the Senate Energy and Technology Committee

**Testimony from Nic Clark, Michigan director of Clean Water Action**

Renewable energy and energy efficiency play a major role in protecting Michigan's lakes, rivers and streams and we thank you for holding hearings on these issues that are so important to our members.

Throughout 2013, Governor Snyder held energy forums across the state and released a series of reports on Michigan's potential to increase use of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Clean Water Action members across the state weighed in at every possible opportunity.

In fact, we have collected over 13,600 actions on renewable energy and energy efficiency from our membership including comments on the MPSC reports, and letters to the legislature and Governor Snyder. We're still talking to residents every day about the benefits of clean energy and expect the number of comments collected to continue growing at a significant rate.

As Governor Snyder has said, we must work to transition away from coal to clean, renewable energy produced right here at home. Michigan is home to some of the oldest and least efficient coal-burning power plants in the nation. These power plants emit dangerous levels of mercury, sulfur, carbon and arsenic, which are linked to heart disease, childhood asthma, lung disease and premature death. They are also some of the biggest polluters of our Great Lakes.

By using more renewable energy, we can curb the pollution from coal-fired power plants that pollutes our air, land and water. Each unit of dirty energy replaced by wind or solar means a cleaner and healthier Michigan. The good news is that research conducted by the governor and Michigan Public Service Commission says that Michigan can triple its use of renewable energy. They also found that the costs of renewable energy have declined dramatically, adding even more benefits to transitioning to more renewables.

By far the best kind of energy is the energy we don't have to use. Governor Snyder's reports released last year found that Michigan wastes a lot of energy. Through energy efficiency measures, we can reduce our use of energy by up to one-third over the next ten years. Eliminating energy waste will saving money, reduce pollution and protect the health of Michiganders across the state.

Through increasing our use of renewable energy and energy efficiency, the Legislature has an incredible opportunity to protect our air, land and Great Lakes. As stewards of 25% of the world's fresh water, it is vital that we act now to protect our Pure Michigan way of life for future generations to enjoy.

We look forward to working with the Legislature to plan for Michigan's energy future.